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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (02/26): Palestinian press report on the State Department reaction to Israel designating two holy sites in the West Bank as Israeli heritage sites

Main Stories:

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida leads with a headline stating that the State Department criticized the Israeli decision to add two holy sites in the West Bank to the list of Israeli heritage sites, calling it "provocative." The dailies report on State Department Spokesman Phillip Crowley noting that the US asked both the Israelis and the Palestinians not to take unilateral actions that would harm the chances for resuming peace negotiations.

In related news, the dailies report that for the fourth consecutive day, protests in Hebron and confrontations between Palestinians and peace activists and Israeli soldiers continued. Al-Quds reports that Palestinian Authority (PA) Minister of Religious Affairs Al-Habbash met with Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa in Cairo yesterday and called for an urgent meeting of the Arab Ministers of Religious Affairs to discuss the implications of the "Israeli violations." Reports also note that Prime Minister Fayyad is expected to perform the Friday Prayers today at the Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron.

Al-Quds front pages news that hundreds of settlers entered Joseph's Tomb in Nablus last night under full protection from the IDF and Israeli police. The settlers destroyed a school and wrote anti-Palestinian statements on the walls.

Al-Ayyam continues to report that indirect negotiations between the Palestinians and Israeli are expected to resume by mid-March. The report notes that despite the "unclear" responses the US submitted to PA President Mahmoud Abbas regarding the formula for negotiations, Arab states seem willing to accept this initiative. The report also notes that the Road Map, Resolutions 242 and 338, and the Arab peace initiative will be the terms of reference for the

negotiations, according to the US responses.

The dailies report on President Abbas' meeting with the Greek President and Prime Minister in Greece yesterday. Abbas will participate in the Arab Follow-Up Committee meeting next Tuesday.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that the UN General Assembly will discuss the implementation of the Goldstone report's recommendations today. The EU parliament calls for implementing the reports' recommendations, according to reports.

BLOCK QUOTE:

Al-Quds runs an editorial under the title "The World Must Provide Solutions to the Current Situation" which criticizes Israel for its continued provocative measures in the Palestinian Territories and accuses the Israeli government of distracting the world from focusing on the real conflict and finding a solution to it. The author believes that the peace process is indeed dead because if it were still alive, he argued, Israel wouldn't have had the courage to do what it is doing now.

Palestinian Cyberspace:

Daoud Kuttub, a prominent Palestinian blogger, blogged under the title, "Are Serious Mideast Negotiations Around the Corner?" saying, "The state [Israel] is ruled by right-wing hardliners that are not likely to make the kind of difficult decisions needed to usher in a

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viable independent state of Palestine with contiguous borders, or a solution to the issues of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees ... The next few months will reveal whether we are seeing a major breakthrough or just another mirage."

Palestinian cyberspace widely circulated remarks made by Harvard professor Martin Kramer at the Herzliya conference under the title "Harvard Prof Advocates Palestinian Population Control", saying "The treatment of Palestinians has long been described as sub-human, and now one Harvard professor treats Israel's refugee program like a rodent infestation. Harvard University's Dr. Martin Kramer delivered a speech in Israel recently, describing his answer to the Palestinian refugee problem: population control. More specifically, he suggests the international community to this by "stopping pro-natal subsidies to Palestinians with refugee status."

RUBINSTEIN